

The Advisers BULLETIN



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JOURNALISM: ragged & under-fed STEPCHILD

By Dorothy Cathell

Co-Adviser to "The Abingtonian," school newspaper, and "The Oracle," literary magazine, of Abington, Pa., Senior High School. This very factual and provocative article first appeared in the December, 1952 issue of "The Clearing House" and is here reprinted by special permission of that publication.

Twenty-five years ago, school newspapers were in their infancy. Few high schools ventured to publish a school newspaper, although school magazines were in a more flourishing condition than today. Newspaper advisers, so-called, knew little or nothing about the technical problems involved in producing a good newspaper.

I well recall my complete mystification when a professional newspaper man at one of the first state conventions I attended inquired whether we used twelve- or fourteen-pica column width and whether we preferred 18- or 24-point heads for our lead articles. A single classroom at Philadelphia's old Central High was more than enough for a meeting of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for the Southeastern District.

Today every respectable elementary school issues at least a mimeographed news sheet, and no up-to-date high school lacks its weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly newspaper, most of them very workmanlike, professional looking papers. Through trial and error, hundreds of press advisers, in addition to their regular teaching duties, have managed to learn the fundamentals of newspaper production, while thousands of students work eagerly and enthusiastically on school staffs. This past March the CSPS convention attracted more than

3,500 student editors and staff workers with their advisers. To address those editors, the President of the United States interrupted his Florida vacation and flew to New York as guest speaker at the huge convention luncheon in the Waldorf-Astoria ballroom. School press has become big-time stuff.

Yet no adviser can attend any press convention without sensing the appalling contrast between the magnitude of the scope of school press and the utterly inadequate provisions made for producing the school newspaper in the average high school. Maybe there are some schools with adequately trained advisers, required courses in jour-

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nalism, well-equipped offices or news rooms, and a sufficient time allotted during the school day for staff meetings, the training of green reporters, preparation of copy, page make-up, and necessary proofreading. Possibly such schools do exist. Every year I come in contact with dozens of newspaper sponsors; none of them teaches in such schools. All of us wish we could.

The typical school situation is more like this. The adviser, usually a member of the English department, has possibly taken one or two college courses in journalism — courses that taught him how to write news articles, features, and editorials but completely overlooked such vital matters as how to choose and organize a staff or how to make up a front page. There are newspaper sponsors in good schools today who, to judge from their papers, have never been told that there is such a thing as headline count.

Now, besides teaching four or five large classes in English, the untrained and often completely inexperienced sponsor must produce a biweekly newspaper. Possibly he is allowed as much as an extra free period a day to do this work, but often none of his staff is free at that time. Usually the school has no course in journalism. If such a course is offered, it may — and frequently does — become a “snap” course, a resort for credit-grabbers, whose interest in journalism is uncertain, to put it mildly, and whose ability is definitely lacking. Unfortunately many staff members have no time on their crowded schedules for an extra course because these students are carrying heavy college-preparatory rosters.

As for equipment, the less said the better. Perhaps the adviser can spare half a bulletin board, a

desk drawer or two, and one drawer of an already overcrowded filing cabinet. Staff work has to be done in most schools in a regular classroom without even the space or comfort that two or three large tables would afford. Some staffs do have one or two typewriters of their own, but many depend on the equipment and volunteer help of the commercial classes, who often can see no reason for working two or three hours after school typing stories that come in late.

Copy desk, staff mailboxes, a separate news room, shelves for a staff library, file cases for an adequate “morgue” or card index on faculty, alumni, and students, staff-owned typewriters — these are fond dreams but very seldom realities. Most of the work on high-school newspapers is done after school hours by advisers already tired after a full day of teaching, working with loyal students who sacrifice other activities and their own recreation time to get out the paper. And it takes real loyalty to sit struggling with word count and headlines while, from the athletic field, the staff hear the yells of the crowd at an exciting football game. Of course, one can usually learn the score by hanging out the window and yelling at someone on his way to the locker room. But a printer's deadline is inflexible, game or no game.

The amazing thing is that the staff seldom lets the school down. Somehow or other, no matter what is going on around school — and we all know there's always something going on — that school paper goes to the printer on time. If a press breaks down and the paper is delays, the whole school protests; but seldom does anyone comment on the paper's unfailing appearance every week or every other week. They take that for granted.

Perhaps that unquestioning acceptance of the regular appearance of the school newspaper is one reason for the predicament of the school publication today. It started as a rather unimportant extra-curricular activity — "came into the school through the back door," as I heard someone say recently. Then, like the immortal Alice, it grew and grew and grew. Faculty and principal, school board and superintendent, student body and community — all thoroughly approve of having a school newspaper, would protest strenuously against its discontinuance, consider it a fine advertisement for the school and a beneficial factor in public relations — but, in too many schools, it is still expected that adviser and staff should make bricks without straw, and often without much clay.

If the high-school newspaper is the legitimate offspring of our present broad educational program, it is about time that the school administration stopped treating journalism like an unwanted stepchild. A child has the right to expect certain advantages — a place to live, food, clothing, education, consideration, and affection. If, then, the newspaper is a good activity, there are certain minimum conditions that advisers have a right to expect. At their many meetings, advisers talk about these as necessary; the trouble is, perhaps, that these discussions never reach the ears of the only people who can and should improve these conditions — the principal, superintendents, and school boards.

The high-school newspaper has the right to have a trained adviser. More colleges should offer courses in sponsoring school publications; more teachers—and especially more *prospective* teachers — should be required or at least encouraged to

take such courses. If a new teacher is to be assigned the adviser's job on the school newspaper, the superintendent or hiring authority should make sure that he is trained for or experienced in that work.

Too many principals and superintendents fail to realize that a newspaper is a highly technical product, requiring specialized knowledge. Some administrators still labor under the delusion that anyone who can teach English can handle a newspaper.

Schools that pride themselves on high standards of scholastic achievement send out newspapers that violate every principle of good newspaper writing and make-up. A school that insists on a sound mathematician to teach algebra and geometry will hand over its school newspaper to some novice English teacher who never heard of the six-word rule or a headline schedule. With the yearly budget for the paper mounting towards the two thousand-dollar level in a medium sized high school, a school is squandering its money when it puts its newspaper into the hands of a teacher who knows little or nothing about the work.

Given a trained teacher, or at least one who has had some experience, the school should have a journalism course, but *NOT* necessarily as a prerequisite for staff membership. Admission to that course should be a privilege restricted to those students who are seriously interested in publications work and who show by passing preliminary tests that they have the necessary ability.

That does not necessarily mean that they must all be excellent students in English. A mediocre English student may have a flair for newspaper writing, a keen nose for news; adversely, an excellent English student may be a total loss

when he sits down to write for print. But on no condition should unit-seeing loafers be permitted to clutter up the journalism class. Furthermore, the journalism class should *NOT* be expected to produce the school newspaper; it should train interested students so that they may work more effectively on the staff.

Whether there is a journalism class or not, some time should be allotted during the regular school day for meetings of reporters and for general staff meetings. A minimum should be one period each week for each group; of course, more time is highly desirable. Inexperienced reporters require training in how to approach teachers, how to get the facts, how to write them up, how to write headlines. Much staff friction and many faculty complaints are due to just one thing: reporters are not properly trained.

Similarly, the entire newspaper staff should have one staff meeting each week to make plans for the next issue, to discuss matters of editorial policy and news and sports coverage, and to check over and criticize the preceding issue. Such staff meetings promote staff spirit and staff responsibility, give the staff members a sense of unity, and help to make the paper the real voice of the student body.

Needless to say, these two minimum periods will not serve to produce the paper. That will still have to be done largely after school hours. But time for staff training and conference, particularly in a school with many after-school activities, will result in a better coordinated paper — and that always means fewer complaints from teachers, students, and community.

Some principals and some Eng-

lish teachers believe that the school newspaper should be produced by the journalism class or by one English class. Needless to say, the advocates of such a procedure have never tried the plan they advocate. Most high-school students do not intend to become journalists; many have no ability for news writing. Trying to train such pupils in journalistic techniques is a waste of time in most cases. Hunting material for news stories involves going all over the school and often outside the school; this is not feasible during a regular class period. Moreover, a group of 25 or 30 pupils in an ordinary classroom cannot even find the necessary space for doing headlines and page make-up. This idea of class production has one main weakness: it just will not work.

A staff really needs space to spread out. Although many schools are today overcrowded, others could find a classroom or some smaller room that could be set apart for the newspaper staff. A regular copy desk may be hard to obtain, but such a room could be equipped with tables and chairs, a filing cabinet, bulletin boards, staff mailboxes for assignments and messages, and at least two typewriters. Such a room would give the staff a feeling of unity and importance. More important, it would greatly increase the opportunities for efficient work and facilitate the distribution of assignments and directions for staff members. Here the staff could refer to the periodicals published by the press organizations and to books on journalism. On the bulletin boards they could find displayed examples of good writing and make-up or types to be avoided. Here exchange papers would be on file, with their wealth of ideas and tune. By the time we have sung

suggestions.

Most important of all, in such a room members of the staff would realize that they are doing an important job, a job so important to the whole school that it is deserving of a special workroom, properly equipped for the efficient production of the school newspaper. When music, art, wrestling, and even pingpong have their own special rooms, it is difficult to inculcate in a staff any feeling of staff pride as long as their work must be done in an ordinary classroom, where, of necessity, the meager equipment must be subordinated to the regular materials for class instruction and where work is often interrupted by students asking the adviser's help on dozens of matters arising from regular class assignments.

Since it is difficult to build up staff spirit and staff pride under the hit-and-miss conditions with which most school staffs have to work, it is becoming increasingly hard to get superior students to sacrifice the time and energy involved in newspaper work. Often advisers do not come into contact until senior year with students who would have made excellent staff members if they had come out for the paper in their sophomore year. Enthusiastic recruiting for school publications work should be made just as important as getting out candidates for the football or hockey team.

A club or class to train sophomore reporters, a follow-up club for juniors, a time within the curriculum for regular staff meetings, emphasis by *all* English teachers on the value of newspaper training and experience, a systematic recommendation to publications advisers of pupils who show an aptitude for writing, and intelligent cooperation

by the faculty in collecting and passing on news and helping student reporters to get the facts, with finally a recognition by administrators and faculty and school board that those who work on the school newspaper are making a valuable contribution to the school — these are minimum essentials if any high school is to continue to produce a good newspaper, one truly representative of the best ability in that school's student body.

Of course, one way to attract students to newspaper work is some system of awards. Boys and girls who really love to write and enjoy the task of putting words together will work without such incentives, but many potential Pulitzers may be lured away by the siren call of athletic fame or the glare of the footlights — particularly when success in a sport means a heavy, expensive sweater or blazer adorned with a huge school letter, the heady thrill of a cheering stadium, and a banquet with a famous All-American as guest speaker.

Others will drop their pencils the minute they hear the first call for senior play tryouts or operetta; and the poor newspaper will limp along on half a staff while all the best seniors rehearse. Those with vocal or instrumental talents will join chorus or band, whose directors are rightfully annoyed when a star soprano cuts rehearsal to finish making up page four.

Nobody knows better than the publications adviser how keen is the competition for talent in the modern high school; however, it is discouraging when the cleverest feature writer in the senior class forsakes the newspaper staff to take the lead in the senior play or when a potential editor in chief, carefully trained for two years, decides he

must drop off the staff to give more time to the school band. And it's not only the newspaper that loses out.

To attract and hold a staff, then, the newspaper, like other school activities, must offer some material reward — actual scholastic credit, emblems, pins, honorary membership in such national organizations as Quill and Scroll, trips to press conventions. The yearly jaunt to New York for the CSPA convention is one of our most potent attractions, even though every student editor pays his own expenses. Staff parties, picnics, dinners — all these promote staff solidarity and help sell the advantages of publications work.

Strangely enough, schools that spend hundreds of dollars annually for athletic awards and sponsor huge, expensive banquets for the heroes of the gridiron and diamond think two or three dollars excessive for a newspaper award. Although most publications are struggling to keep out of the red, awards must usually be paid for from practically non-existent profits. The only banquet our staff ever had was paid for by the members. In most schools, student editors elected to Quill and Scroll must pay for their own pins.

Perhaps the time has come for publications advisers to insist on more recognition for their hard-working staffs. The advisers might point out, for example, that the graduates who are bringing honor to their Alma Mater by winning competitive scholarships, by doing superior work in college, and by making Phi Beta Kappa and Deans' Honor Rolls, the boys who win Rhodes scholarships and Fulbright fellowships are much more likely to be former newspaper editors than former football or basketball

stars.

Colleges are always eager to accept the boy or girl who has edited his high-school newspaper or year-book; they know that he is usually the cream of the crop. Yet one cannot help recalling that old Bible saying, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country."

We advisers know what a truly amazing job these high-school newspaper staffs are doing — with untrained, overworked advisers, little or no regular training, less equipment, scant time during the school day, and inadequate recognition, to put it very mildly. We all believe that the work is valuable, or we wouldn't be wearing ourselves and our staffs out to get it done.

The number of our former staff members making good in college, on college papers, and in professional journalism stands as living testimony to the value student editors gain from their staff work. If all this is true — and I am sure that administrators, principals, and even other faculty members will admit the truth of most of my statements — then it is about time that we who are in school press work start a strenuous campaign of education to gain for our too long neglected stepchild some measure of the consideration to which the school newspaper staff is entitled.

Let's invite principals and superintendents to our press conferences. Let's put these problems squarely up to them. Our child has grown so fast that perhaps Papa hasn't even noticed how his offspring has pushed through the elbows and out the knees. Maybe if we put it very nicely to Papa, he'll see the need of a new suit and some of the other possessions a growing child needs. At least, we can try.

'Here's My Picture'

By Lawrence Niblett

The adviser to "The Castellan," yearbook of Cooley High School in Detroit, Michigan, contributes some observations on the most important aspects of all annuals — a good, sympathetic, cooperative photographer.

An American high school yearbook is a curious phenomenon. It is neither an art magazine nor a literary digest. It never satisfies all the students, particularly in November; but in June, on publication, most students eagerly turn its pages, treat it roughly while collecting autographs, and intend to keep it forever. It causes teachers to rail against it when students are taken out of their classes for pictures, but it finds in teachers, too, strong defenders for its worth in high school life. Administrators like it for its accurate record, for its sentimental values, for its good publicity, but insist that it be financially solvent. Yearbooks long ago arrived, changed, developed patterns, and are here to stay.

Also here to stay — right in the middle where he belongs — is the adviser. His are the problems of maintaining staff morale, of building all school cooperation, of handling contracts, and of bringing out the most satisfying book every year. Treading carefully the line between artistic demands and practical considerations is his ever present and most significant challenge; to compromise is his job.

We all have had the experience of receiving our yearbook back from the college judges with the analysis of pictures, "too many dull, formal, posed ones." Well, of course, there are! We must picture all our clubs and if possible all our students by study halls. We need to serve the freshmen as well as the seniors if we are to represent the school, if we are to sell our

books successfully. Ninth grade Jimmy wants to see his picture; he hopes it will be clear; he doesn't care if it is one of fifty. We know that he must be pictured in a large group if we are to meet our budget.

This respect for the practical does not mean that we cannot create interesting pages. Even in large groups such as choirs it is desirable to include the local color of a piano or other instruments. Pictures from different angles, as from a balcony backstage down on the choir standing around the piano, can add variety without sacrificing clarity. Changing the background by taking pictures on the athletic field, in the gym, or in the library will help.

But unless you are a teacher, a parent, or a pupil (all of whom buy the book) these pictures will still be monotonous to look at. To satisfy those who are personally interested in the pictures, we still have an excellent photographer-engraver-printer team. The photographer is the anchor man.

We can compromise with good reason as we give our school a popular, representative book, but we cannot compromise as we try to get the most qualified photographer possible. How many of us realize what a fine bargaining position the public school is in as it hears bids for photographic work. We offer exclusive rights to take group and candid shots within our building and to take individual graduate pictures for the yearbook. We offer the right of a professional man to prove his ability to poten-

tial customers on public property and in his studio. These are not mean privileges.

For extending them we must receive value. Our photographer should be personally responsible for taking all pictures and finishing them. He should comply with our schedule of pictures at all times. He should take group pictures with dispatch and skill, candid shots with imagination, and graduate portraits with attention to individual features. Above all he must be a gracious, tactful person who knows adolescents.

How can we get such a man? We can begin by not being satisfied with mediocre work, with tardy arrival or a new man substituted for the regular one, or with commercialism on school property. We can realize that schools do have

master photographers that are entirely ethical, professional, and satisfying. We can look for a new man that perhaps is in business for himself who has done school work before and is recommended, and who will agree to our contract of high qualifications.

In any case our particular problem is distinctive with our school. We can learn from conventions, from critical services, and from articles, but we cannot apply all that we learn to our own yearbook because there are too many variables in our own school block, in our principal's office, and in our work room. Perhaps the most unusual feature of the high school yearbook is its highly personal quality. This baffles the critics. This sells the books. This makes advising fun.

\$100 Awards Offered For Editorials

Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, Pa., will again this year (1953) offer to high school newspapers in America fifty \$100 awards and honor medals for outstanding, single editorials which speak up for the American Way of Life. Every school newspaper in America is eligible to compete — elementary, secondary, public, parochial, and private.

School newspapers wishing to enter should submit tear sheets on which is printed the editorial carrying out the fundamentals of the Credo of The American Way of Life, the name and publication date of the paper, and the names of the students on the editorial staff of that paper. Although formal entry forms are not required they may be obtained from Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. The deadline is November 11, 1953, but nominations

may be submitted at any time.

Freedoms Foundation is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian awards organization chartered in 1949 for the specific purpose of annually making awards to Americans who make outstanding contributions to a better understanding of freedom by the things which they write, do, or say. It is financed by widespread public subscription support.

The \$100,000 Freedom Awards for outstanding contributions to a better understanding of the American Way of Life during 1952 went to more than eight hundred American individuals, schools, and organizations.

In the 1952 High School Newspaper Editorials category, 45 high school newspapers from schools in over 20 states in this country were each winners of the \$100 award and honor medal for an editorial.

'Dear Sister: — Catholicism In A Catholic School Paper'

By Sister Mary Margretta, R. S. M.

The Chairman of the Journalism Department in Catholic Central High School, Troy, N. Y., and adviser to that school's newspaper and yearbook, offers, at the request of the editor, some practical ideas on Catholicism in the newspaper of a Catholic school. She also suggested the attractive headline above.

How Catholic must your newspaper be? And where do you tangibly express the Catholicism?

Isn't it too wonderful to realize that Catholicism in a school paper isn't necessarily "dog-tagged"? And, moreover, that religion in your paper isn't boxed? For unless your religious program is infiltrating the All-Americans whom you teach — and excluding itself into their everyday lives, thoughts, and, therefore, publication, then you are not permitting the cry of St. Paul to be echoed in your youngsters, "Christ liveth in me."

Catholic dogma and moral theology will rarely demand explicit expression in your school press. But unless the principles of Christian social living are permeating every article from page one to the last advertisement on page four, then I fear that your paper may be as un-democratic and as un-American as the organ of a subversive group. Let me be more specific if I may have shocked you. Are your young journalists practitioners of integrity and of charity? On a straight news story, have they learned to avoid the dangers of "coloring" the news by reporting inaccurately, incompletely, or, intentionally, untruthfully? The freedom of the American press can suffer from a reporter's inaccuracy or misplaced emphasis.

May I illustrate with a parable? If you attended the 1953 CSPA

convention, then you probably heard Mr. Samuel Sharkey's advice to young people who were anticipating careers in journalism. Reiterating the admonition of so many newspapermen, he suggested that the student round out his academic background with a study of history and languages, especially, he said, French, Spanish, German, Italian — then he added "Russian" — and the audience responded audibly with an incoherent mixture of laughter, groaning, and sighs of dismay. Consequently, reacting to audience reaction, he elaborated by pointing out that it would be a simple matter to buy a book of Russian vocabulary and to learn a few words. The following morning, *The New York Times*, Mr. Sharkey's own paper, headlined the story with the key information that the speaker had urged a study of Russian. The reporter who reported the reporter "colored" Mr. Sharkey's speech. That story didn't tell the whole story, and half-truths can be terribly un-Christian, and, simultaneously, un-democratic, and, definitely, un-American.

Integrity and charity halt the young journalists whose tendency is to feature the activities of their own special crowd, forgetting or minimizing the multitudes of curricular and co-curricular engagements of the rest of the school world. And isn't an adviser wrestling with a real, but understandable, problem

of young editors who work so energetically at what becomes a full-time project, that unconsciously they are unaware that other students are working just as energetically at some comparable and equally absorbing activity.

Actual focus upon Catholicism is, however, made on the editorial page. But, again, it must be of student growth. And may I interrupt a little discussion of editorial policy to inject this bit of lay-out and make-up advice: An actual isolated photographic reproduction of a statue or a religious picture does not belong in your school paper. Catholics don't wear placards to announce their Catholicism, and, likewise, a Catholic school paper need not display unrelated religious pictures to achieve an atmosphere of sanctity.

Do I mean, then, never any religious articles in your newspaper? Believe me, no. But let the beautiful dramatic liturgy of the Church inspire your art students as it has the great artists for twenty centuries. Your journalism group, discussing possible editorial material, couldn't possibly ignore the liturgical Church calendar in planning Christmas, Lenten, Easter, and May issues. Then why not let an original illustration grow out of the editorial? Student art is student activity and a far cry from the mere selection of a professional photograph to be mailed to the engraver.

To revert to editorials — do you have a policy? Do you assign topics? Elasticity is tremendously important in either case. Some Catholic schools determine in advance of page planning that there will be three editorials, one of which will be of a religious nature; the other two: school and/or local,

and/or national. Again, at staff meetings you will discover that the students, breathing the daily atmosphere of a Catholic school, will unhesitatingly suggest an appropriate, seasonal topic for the religious editorial.

At one of our meetings last week one student, not a member of the staff, was interested to know what the editors meant when they referred to the masthead. Someone quickly identified it for her by mentioning that, among other things, it carried the school seal above the list of page editors. From such a lead developed the discussion of the school seal, the motto written in it, and a potential editorial on the motto, "Pro Deo et Patria." Would this be our religious editorial? What about "et Patria"? Well, what about it? Is there a line of demarcation? I think not. Didn't the greatest Teacher tell us that we might "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's"? Are we "less Catholic" if we become "more American"? Such a condition would be impossible. Most people, I suppose, have forgotten that Thomas Jefferson used a copy of Cardinal Bellarmine's seventeenth century writings when he winnowed the passage of governments' deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Again, it is the Jeffersonian area that one finds a Christian and unmistakably American principle, whether one recites it "all men are created equal" or paraphrases the Christian social principle of "the individual dignity of every human person." Students' appreciation of this basic idea will nullify any tendency to degrade the school paper with unworthy gossip, harmful trivia, or youth's fiercest weapon of ugly, unwarranted criticism.

Stimulating Creative Work

By Lillian R. Brown

The former adviser of "Pen and Ink," a magazine for creative writing at the Haverford Senior High School, Havertown, Pa., here sets forth the main ideas of a talk she gave at the annual general meeting of the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association at this year's CSPA convention at Columbia University in New York City.

When the president of the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association asked me to speak on how to get students to write, I thought, "That will be a short speech: 'I don't know'." And I think no one knows what arouses creative effort. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Perhaps the best any of us can hope for is just not to be a windbreak.

My first real experience with creative writing was almost involuntary. After finishing my master's examinations, I rather surprised myself by taking a junior high school position. The surprise grew daily. Those seventh graders respected nothing. They were fountains of energy. The faintest interest in their activity brought an avalanche of response. They brought me log cabins, turtles, tadpoles — even jars of frogs. They wanted to make "projects" a new idea to me. In sheer self defence I had to find some outlet for their energy. Soon we had a writers' club. The children had a keen sense of rhyme and rhythm and wrote with spontaneity. One girl brought this:

*The wind in March
Keeps blowing all day;
It blows the paper
And leaves away;*

*It blows the clothes
Out on the line;
It keeps blowing and
Blowing all the time.*

*Big trees and little trees
Bow beneath the wind;
It blows off our hats
And is not very kind.*

Not poetry certainly, but fairly passable verse.

A boy with a knack for limericks produced this:

*There was a descendent of Lin-
coln*

*Who said, "I have just been a-
thinkin' —*

If people ate ice

Would that not be nice?

*They would both be eatin' and
drinkin'."*

Before long we felt that the better material should be given permanent form; so the girls typed some of the poems and we ran them off on the ditto. The boys cut rather ragged looking linoleum blocks for covers. Finally we stapled our magazine together. The typing was crooked, the copy was faint, and the cover was not the likeness of anything; but it was our own — and we loved it. So *Pen Points*, our first magazine, was begun.

Soon I was transferred to senior high; but so were my students, and we went right on as we had begun. They dashed in and out with verse and stories, and we all criticized, praised, and enjoyed without re-

straint. Since our facilities were limited, we could not print long articles, and a year passed before we thought we had enough good verse to justify a magazine. The first issue of *Pen and Ink* looked little better than *Pen Points*; but we were delighted with it. Before long we were getting material from students outside our original group, and a staff was needed. Circulation increased and format improved. One thing I hope will never change: both magazines grew out of a need to preserve what young people felt the need to write. Has a school magazine any other justification for existence?

Through the years our material has come from three sources: regular English classes, creative writing classes, and voluntary contributions.

I used, at the end of our study of short story, essay, or poetry, to assign an original paper of the type in question. I think the result of a ballad assignment did much to discourage the custom. Marie, failing to produce a ballad, soothed me by saying, "I just couldn't do it, but I'll write you something in study." she did. This was the result:

*As I was standing in the street,
I felt a foot upon my seat.
I turned around and who was
there!*

*A donkey with a face so fair.
A foolish look came o'er his face.
He said, "I wish to beg your
grace.*

*I thought you were my master
cruel*

Who never gives me any gruel."

Well, there was more, equally bad; but that is enough to show you why I never demand a poem of each English student.

To give an opening for original work, we have developed a free

lance assignment. Two or three times a semester we break away entirely from routine composition. I promise to judge papers only on context and interest. Not even misspelled words will be penalized. Furthermore, papers may be written outside class. The usual composition period is spent on suggestions — though the student is absolutely free to write about anything which interests him.

Essays and Essay Writing by Tanner and published by the Atlantic Monthly Press, and *Learning to Write* by Reed Smith and published by Little, Brown and Co., have the best list of topics I know for informal essay. One day may be given to discussion of the short story. *Experiments in Writing*, published by Harcourt Brace — probably out of print, but worth a trip to a second-hand book shop — is excellent for many types of writing, especially the short story. There we got the idea of using *Post* covers for suggestions. Do you remember that picture of the villainous-looking little boy, sitting at a frilly dressing table, reading his sister's diary? Any girl could write about that. Come to think of it, a boy might do even better. Family legends, local history, a file of newspaper clippings, personal experience — all sorts of sources for plots are suggested.

Verse, though never required, is encouraged. Since my classes have been reading Wordsworth, Milton, and Shakespeare, they are afraid to try poetry. If there are to be any results, class formality must be broken. Familiar nonsense verse helps — the more foolish the better, so long as the rhythm is marked. The relation between rhythm in verse and rhythm in music is pointed out. Familiar verse often fits a familiar hymn

part of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to the tune of *America the Beautiful* everyone has the idea. Since a full page of prose or eight lines of verse fulfils the requirement, we get considerable poetic effort — a little bribery here, perhaps, but they really should try. Though not graded, free lance papers are carefully read and are returned with extensive comment and suggestion. Folk songs provide a student with a good means of checking his own meter; and I make a great effort to find some familiar melody which fits the pattern he has been trying to achieve. Perhaps a later period of suggestions may deal with some simple verse patterns; cinquain, quatrain, and couplet are all popular forms.

Success with a free lance seems to depend principally on two things: the absence of a grade and the breaking down of formality. The former, I think, partly explains why we seldom have to cope with plagiarism; though the strongest factors here are the student's innate honesty and his genuine pride in work of his own creation.

Creative writing classes, when we have them, simply carry further what the free lance has begun. Work is more extensive and much more technical. For poetry, we find *The Hollow Reed*, by Mary J. Wrinn, better than anything else we have found. Directions are clear and simple, and examples numerous and inviting.

Each student in creative writing is required to submit manuscripts to magazines, and to produce at least two rejections slips. Many of these young people really want to write; and since the first rejection slip may bring permanent discouragement, we have tried to make stu-

dents feel that rejections are a universal experience. Surprisingly enough, papers are accepted. One student was asked to become a regular contributor to *Jack and Jill*. The same girl had a nonsensical poem accepted by Walt Disney. Church papers have been our best — though least paying — customers. *The Writers' Handbook*, published by The Writer, Inc., is very helpful to anyone looking for lists of markets. Though classes have not existed for the sake of *Pen and Ink*, they have helped us improve the quality of our material.

Voluntary contributions to the magazine have always been numerous. Staff members watch for talent, so that often a shy boy slips in, saying, "This isn't much good, but Sam said you might like it." English teachers, too, send in good papers, or persuade students to bring them. Comparatively little of our magazine is staff written. Once a student is really working for *Pen and Ink*, he, like the sponsor, becomes an agency through which the creative effort of the school may flow. For me, the most rewarding aspect of magazine sponsorship has been the unselfish effort of the staff to bring other students to the fore. Because they have been willing to put the good of the students first, it has been possible for *Pen and Ink* to live solely for the encouragement of creative effort.

And if you really want spontaneous writing, unbend, sometimes, and create an informal atmosphere. If you are willing to do that, if you yourself really catch enthusiasm from a youngsters' blundering efforts to express what words cannot catch, you will find that the wind of creative effort frequently listeth to blow through your classroom.

Some Notes On Headline Writing

Some notes on headline writing as used by an active school newspaper adviser for a talk he gave on the subject at a Columbia Scholastic Press Association Convention.

Headlines have certain definite purposes, and here are four of them:

1. They give prominence to news in proportion to the importance of that news. Pictures first and headlines next are the first things almost everyone sees in a newspaper.

2. A headline advertises a story by summarizing it.

3. They have a speed consideration. Built for quick reading, a headline serves as an index to the content of a story for the busy reader who must choose what he reads.

4. They provide a more pleasing, newsy appearance to a page of print, especially if they appear below the halfway fold of the page on every page.

What are some of the faults of headlines as seen in school newspapers?

1. They are not mechanically correct; that is they are not counted carefully enough. If the flush-left style is used, some lines are too short; and in inverted pyramids, step-deck heads, hanging indentations, and cross lines the same thing applies. Definitely "gaposis" is bad in any style of headline.

2. Too many past tense verbs are used. This results in dullness and deadness. Use the more lively infinitive, present, or future tenses. Use the past tense for events dated in that headline in past time.

3. Too many label heads are used — especially on the editorial page. Examples are: *Movie, Book Review, Clubs*, etc.; definite information in a fair and pleasing way is much more attractive.

4. The use of *A, An, The*, and parts of the verb "to be" is usually unnecessary because they are often understood.

5. Unbelievable dullness. Such a head as "Camera Club Holds Meeting" is an example. Say what was done at the meeting. Outlaw that much-over-used word, "holds."

6. The repetition of words or ideas in different decks.

7. Using material in the headline that is not in the story.

8. Failure to use or imply a verb in each deck.

9. The attempt to be alliterative, clever, or funny. Occasionally such things work; but when they do not the results are sad.

10. Use of the same words and expressions in different heads on the same page. This occurs quite often and should be avoided.

11. Ending lines with prepositions or a divided word.

A good head tells the story accurately, completely, fairly, and pleasingly.

To do this certain things are needful or helpful:

1. A headline schedule. Without one it is almost impossible for a beginner to write a head.

2. The will and the patience to develop the knack of writing heads in the right way.

3. The need for correctly written lead paragraphs to articles, for out of them do nearly all heads come.

4. This writer has found a headline copy sheet with numbered spaces on it to be very helpful. With such it is almost impossible to have a wrong count and not know it.

2 Inspirational Talks Highlight Meeting Of Advisers Association

Two talks on an inspirational nature highlighted the annual general meeting of the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association held in the McMillin Theatre at Columbia University on Friday, March 13, 1953. Over 150 were present, and Miss Ernestine Robinson, president of the organization, was in charge.

* * * *

The statement of income and expenditure of the Association from March 1, 1952 to March 11, 1953, was read by Mrs. May J. Kelly, secretary-treasurer, and is as follows:

<i>Income</i>	\$1443.25
<i>Expenditures</i>	
Clerical help	\$ 63.47
Copyrighting fees	4.00
Printing AA Bulletins	300.20
Miscellaneous printing	10.75
AA envelopes for mailing	59.17
Letter heads	34.69
Postage	92.00
Express and freight	10.07
Refunds	8.50
<hr/>	
Total	\$ 582.85

Net Surplus (Income less Expenditures)

* * * *

Mr. Bryan Barker, editor of The Advisers Bulletin, summarized his objectives for the year as follows: 1, to get the Bulletin out on time; 2, to make it more real and effective in appearance and content.

In order to realize his objectives, Mr. Barker had to find a new publisher whom he could contact more frequently and one who was located within a reasonable distance of Mercersburg, Penna. After talk-

ing with him it was decided to change the format to the type used by The Reader's Digest.

The editor of the Bulletin voiced his appreciation for the cooperation which he had received during the year. He asked members of the organization to send suggestions, articles, or complaints so that the Bulletin could be improved.

He would like to print, he added, articles dealing with duplicate publications, elementary school newspapers, yearbooks, and magazines. He would like, too, contributions from advisers in Florida, California, State of Washington, and other distant points from New York City.

* * * *

Mr. Lambert Greenawalt, chairman of the committee for the Revision of the Syllabus, reported that little progress had been made by his group because of his inability to get together with the Director of CSPA and work out a plan of procedure. Now that a suitable one has been worked out, Mr. Greenawalt suggested that the advisers write to him and make suggestions for improving the old syllabus. In order to give every member an opportunity to express his opinions, a new questionnaire will be sent out in the fall.

* * * *

That advisers be sure to read the announcement as soon as they receive it with regard to the annual contest was stressed by Mr. Charles F. Troxell, associate director of CSPA. He made special reference to the following items in the contest announcements: 1, the new entry date is December 10 (except

for elementary schools); 2, the directions given in regard to procedure in mailing publications; 3, how to enclose check with an explanation of the same and entry blank in the same envelope; 4, how to help the judges do a good job by getting the publication, etc., in on time.

"If every adviser will read the announcements and follow the directions, papers won't be coming in a day or two before the convention and expect to be rated with the others," said Mr. Troxell.

* * * *

Miss Ernestine Robinson, the president, gave certificates of Life Membership in the association to Marguerite Herr, Gertrude Turner, Zita E. Mallon and Spencer S. Fishbaine, retired teachers whose contributions to the success of the association were outstanding during their membership in the organization.

Since this was the first time for these awards to be given, Miss Robinson read the citation to the group and exhibited a copy for examination.

* * * *

The highlights of the meeting, as already named above, were two talks by Dr. Marion C. Sheridan, head of the English department of James Hillhouse High School, New

THE ADVISERS BULLETIN

Published four times yearly in May, October, January, and March by the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association, Columbia University, Box 11, Low Memorial Library, New York 27, N. Y.

The editor of The Advisers Bulletin is Mr. Bryan Barker, The Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Penna.

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Haven Conn., and former president of the National Council of Teachers of English, and Miss Lillian R. Brown, former adviser of *Pen and Ink*, Haverford Senior High School, Havertown, Penna. The former spoke on "The Role of the Adviser" and the latter on "Stimulating Creative Work."

* * * *

Mr. DeWitt D. Wise, who was scheduled to speak on "CSPA Publications," could not be present. He submitted his observations for publication as follows:

"Both the *Duplicated Publication Fundamentals* has been re-edited by Earl C. Whitbeck and the official CSPA duplicated scorebook has been revised and reprinted in time for the 29th Annual Contest.

"Next CSPA publication to receive attention is the *Yearbook Fundamentals*, which will be revised for the coming yearbook contest. Included in the new edition will be a section about offset-lithographic yearbooks. The official CSPA scorebook also will receive the attention of the editor and his committee.

"Last year Eve B. Bunnell and her committee rewrote the *CSPA Magazine Fundamentals* and revised its official scorebook.

"The *Newspaper Fundamentals* also was reprinted last year and its scoring scheme was made to conform to CSPA's alert practices.

"All these CSPA publications and scorebooks were designed to conform to similar typographic standards."

* * * *

In the afternoon of this same day a tea was held at the Men's Faculty Club, 400 West 117th Street, for all advisers who wished to attend. It was "on the house," and a goodly number, men and women, turned up.

Printer Names 6 Essentials In Good Pictures For Yearbooks

The editor of the Bulletin asked Mr. William E. Brown, representative of Thomsen-Ellis-Hutton Co. of Baltimore, Md., publishers of some very fine school and college annuals, to give his experienced opinion as to what constitutes a good yearbook picture from the technical point of view.

When one considers the thousands of photographs that are taken each year for the host of secondary school and college yearbooks in this country, one is impressed with the prevailing lack of knowledge as to what constitutes a good picture for a yearbook.

Broadly speaking, there are two points of view from which a yearbook picture may be evaluated. The first concerns the appropriateness and story value of the picture; and a good sized article could be written about that phase of yearbook photography alone. Many pictures appear in yearbooks that are technically satisfactory but contribute little or nothing to the book itself as a record of the school year. However, for the purpose of this article, we must leave the matter of selection, planning, and dramatic content to others and concern ourselves with the technical side of yearbook photography.

First of all a yearbook other than the cover is comprised of paper and ink. This point is so elemental that we often forget that these two substances impose limitations, and the machinery which in turn places the ink on the paper further limits the planners and producers of yearbooks.

Whether the method of reproduction employed for placing the ink on paper is letterpress or offset lithography, one thing is certain: the photograph must be screened in order to separate the tone values;

and that in turn means that the picture will lose some of its sharpness, depth, and clarity. Therefore, we must always start with the best picture obtainable from the technical point of view.

What are some of the characteristics of this best picture?

First, it should be a glossy print on high contrast photographic paper. A dull finished print may look well in a frame on the family mantelpiece, but it is not the medium from which good yearbook reproductions can be made.

Second, focus must be sharp all over the picture and critically sharp if many faces appear as in the typical group or sports shot. You may know now while looking at the photograph that the boy in the left background is Joe Smith, your ace quarterback, but will anybody else know it when the picture is reduced in size, screened, and printed with the resulting loss of detail.

Third, extraneous backgrounds should be planned out of the picture when it is taken; but if they do appear on the print, crop them out before reproducing in your book. Concentrate attention on the essentials of the picture. Crop out the bare walls, table tops, steps, and vistas of concrete pavement or wood flooring.

Fourth, the good picture technically is about the size planned for in the book. Never expect a clear, sharp reproduction in your

yearbook if the photograph must be enlarged several times. Every glossy print has some grain in it. When the print is enlarged, this grain becomes objectionable and results in a blurred, hazy reproduction. Similarly, an 8 x 10 print will invariably lose detail in the reduced to $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, for example, reduction. Shadows will blend into dark masses and features will become muddy. If you want to use only a portion of a picture and it must be enlarged — go back to the negative and reprint the part you want to size.

Fifth, a good negative alone is no assurance of a good glossy contrasting print. Poor photographic printing in the dark room and, even commoner, poor ferrotyping can produce a print too dark, too light, or just plain gray all over with multitudes of little spots on the picture area. Such a glossy print simply will not reproduce well in the book even though the original negative may have been a work of art.

Sixth, a picture should contain some elements of good composition. A simple group picture should be so arranged that all faces are seen. A basketball shot should indicate

enough of the action so that the story is self-evident. Let the picture indicate by its very nature that this is basketball being played and not simply a boy dressed in a tee shirt and shorts exercising in the gymnasium. Debates, dramatics, and club activities are usually difficult to portray. Quite often pictures of this type look as if they were taken in a photographic studio because nothing has been included that sets the stage for the reader.

At this point, one might digress into the realms of content, lighting, and arrangement of yearbook photographs. However, that is beyond our scope at this time. Technically speaking, yearbook pictures that adhere to the six rules outlined above will reproduce well in ink on the paper used in your book. Our last item — unless you are prepared to allocate extra money for your printing budget, avoid the over dark or delicately lighted subjects. They will not print well in normal operations and will require extra handling by your printer or lithographer if he is to achieve the unusual effects called for by the picture copy.

A Book Which Could Help

"Journalism and the Student Publication," written by Maguire and Spong and published in 1951 by Harper and Brothers of New York City, is a most helpful, informative, attractive book for any newspaper or yearbook staff to own and use. The Bulletin editor regrets that he has forgotten the price of it, but he has no financial interest in recommending it.

Here are some of the 23 chapter titles in this 430-page publication: Writing the Lead, Writing the Story, What Goes Into a Headline,

Processing the Illustrations, What Is Good Make-up, Features Help Make the Paper, Writing the Feature, The Business of Advertising, Publishing the Yearbook, and so forth.

To elaborate further on one of these chapters one may turn, say, to that on Writing the Lead. This weak aspect of so many school newspapers is thoroughly dealt with in a clear, simple, and interesting manner. A dozen examples of leads are given and commented on.

Notes From The Editor's Desk

The 29th Columbia Scholastic Press Association Convention has come and gone. As usual, the Waldorf-Astoria luncheon speakers were a surprise, but they lived up to all expectations. In fact, the Editor has learned that there were more favorable comments on General Romulo's address after the Convention than had ever before been received in the CSPA office for a similar event. A number of requests were received for copies of his talk but, unfortunately, it was extemporaneous and no recordings were made of it.

* * * *

There were some interesting side-lights to the table conversation during the luncheon. The General and Ambassador Gross talked at length about their mutual problems in the UN. The former was mentioned as a candidate for Secretary-General in the press a few days before his talk; but from his chat during the luncheon it appeared that he would have been happy to be selected. He told, with some amusement, that his son, a student in Georgetown Preparatory School near Washington, had hoped to attend the Convention. The school planned to send fourteen delegates and his son was fifteenth on the list! He was assured that had the Association known it, arrangements would have been made for him to be a special guest. "No," he said, "he has to learn to take his chances."

In talking with Miss Sarah Churchill, General Romulo, who sat next to her, suggested that she visit the Philippines at some time. She seemed favorably disposed to the suggestion until he said he was going to call on her to say a few

words before the luncheon guests. "No! No!" she replied, "If you do, I'll *never* go to the Philippines!" At her consternation the General laughed heartily and promised to refrain from mentioning it.

The CSPA Director mentioned to Miss Churchill that the luncheon was one outstanding affair that her distinguished father had not yet addressed. She thought a moment and said, "You are right," adding, "perhaps it could be arranged." "We know she sent him a complete story of what happened, including pictures of the event."

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All of us make some sacrifices for the Convention and for other activities of the Association, but few have ever gone so far as Mrs. May J. Kelly, Secretary of the Elementary Division and Secretary-Treasurer of the Advisers Association. As she was leaving the Waldorf-Astoria hotel after the March 14 luncheon, she caught her heel in a rug and was thrown forward and down a stairway. She thought she had pulled a ligament in her leg. With the help of her delegation and some advisers, she reached her bus for Atlantic City but could not get a doctor until the following Monday. Then it was discovered she had broken her leg!

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At the present time the figure for renewals and new memberships in the Advisers Association in connection with the recent Contest is 925. This includes one Adviser each from Hawaii and the Philippines, two from Puerto Rico, and four each from Canada and Alaska. Montana and Nevada are the only states without membership in the Newspaper-Magazine category. New

York led with 231, Pennsylvania 106, New Jersey 105, Connecticut 50, Massachusetts 40, and Maryland had 33. The Pacific Coast had 40, the Gulf Coast 31, and the states bordering the Great Lakes, other than New York and Pennsylvania, 96.

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The Director of the CSPA has been made an Honorary Member of the Maryland Scholastic Press Advisers Association. The interchange of courtesies between the press and Advisers Associations as to speakers, judges, and other related activities, is indicative of the harmony and close cooperation that has given strength to individuals and organizations over the years.

* * * *

During the current school year, we are informed, 18 schools and one commercial firm have borrowed 91 yearbooks from the Medalist and First Class ratings in the 1952 Contest for study and consultation. This is part of the loan arrangement by which schools may borrow either individual books or groups representative of their own classifications for staff use.

* * * *

Now that it is getting on toward Yearbook Contest time, we thought we would review some of the ratings given in the 1952 Contest. There were 1008 books entered of which 11.5% received Medalist rating, 35.5% First Place, 31.1% Second Place, 17.2% Third Place, and 4.7% Fourth Place. At times, letters have been received by the CSPA which appear to indicate that ratings in other competitions are much more liberal. This may be true in individual cases, but a comparison of the available figures brings one to the conclusion that those who rate yearbooks appear

to come up with about the same overall results regardless of the area in which they operate. Incidentally, we are informed that the 19th Annual Yearbook Critique and Contest announcements will be in the mail on or about the first of May. The deadline, as usual, will be July 1 with the results made known at the Yearbook Conference — and Short Course — at Columbia, on Friday and Saturday, October 9-10.

* * * *

And speaking of contests for yearbooks reminds us of a very pertinent comment a judge made a year or so back on the question of the cost of yearbook covers. His observations are, to say the least, revealing. Here it is:

"Covers are a patent source of profit. My own experience indicates that manufacturers are inclined to charge what the traffic will bear. Comparative figures among Columbia entries bear out this fact. In this year's contest, there were entries supporting this. One school paid almost twice as much for practically the same cover. One school had a unit cost of \$1.27 for an 8½" x 11" job that would not have been a bargain at 50 cents. I think we can profitably insist that advisers look to their own cover buying, or at least know what it costs. The money saved can be invested in the book."

* * * *

The editor of the Bulletin wrote in his notes in the March issue that he would put an article on interviewing in the May number. Well, it isn't to be found in these pages because of lack of space. He does, however, promise that it will be put in the October number. And along with it may be printed a list of 200 synonyms for "said."

Guide To Good Books

By Hans Christian Adamson

(Colonel, U. S. Air Force, retired. Author in the fields of aviation, astronomy, popular science, biography, history, transportation, nature, etc. The reviews appearing in this Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association Bulletin, published quarterly at Columbia University in the City of New York, are also distributed to four hundred United States Armed Services libraries in thirty-six Commands throughout the world.)

Outstanding feature of the current issue of *The Book of Fishes* edited by John Oliver La Gorce and published by the National Geographic Society (\$6.50 — non-fic.), is the information it contains with regard to the steadily expanding research into fish life, and its vital relation to the solving of human health problems. This 540-page book contains 159 full color pages including more than 100 magnificent color paintings. Without becoming technical, *The Book of Fishes* gives an excellent review of the progress made by scientists in fixing the position of the denizens of the deep as they affect mankind with respect to human food and human health. As for the latter, there is a fascinating, fast-reading article about the Lerner Marine Laboratory of the American Museum of Natural History on North Bimini Island near Miami. Under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Michael Lerner, live specimens are obtained at sea and stored in huge tidal fish pens flanked by large docks. This unique arrangement, invented and financed by the Lerner, makes it possible to keep living fish of all sizes in their natural environment for any length of time. One of the

main targets of scientists who do specialized research at the Lerner Laboratories is cancer. For readers who regard fishing as a sport, *The Book of Fishes* offers ample entertainment and information in words as well as pictures.

Bob Mathias — young enough to remain, even at this writing, a college student, yet old enough to be an outstanding winner at two Olympics — emerges as what he is, a Champion of Champions in *Bob Mathias* (Prentice Hall — \$2.95 — non-fic.) by Jim Scott. The author of this well-illustrated authorized biography is a sportswriter and long-time friend of the Mathias family. He has produced a fine portrait of one of the all-time greats in the world of athletes.

Those addicted to fishing or who dream of going off to far-away places for monsters of the deep, will find what they are looking for in *Heaven Has Claws* (Random House — \$3.50 — non-fic.) by A. Conan Doyle. From start to finish the book bubbles with exciting action. It deals with the experiences of the author and his wife in seeking and catching man-killing sharks, rays, and other combat-minded fish that make life dangerous for the natives who live on

islands along the East African coast south of Dar-Es-Salaam. Mr. Conan Doyle has a lively, not to say flamboyant, style that could stand a little tuning down. But if *Heaven Has Claws* is a taste of things to come from this promising son of the creator of Sherlock Holmes, we will be only too happy to be among those who are waiting.

When I read a book like *The Velvet Doublet* (Doubleday — \$3.50 — fic.) in which James Street cooks up a story about Christopher Columbus, I wonder how much of its contents consists of fascinating fiction as against the time-tested proportion of solid facts. Mr. Street has created a very lively and convincing main-character in Juan Rodrigo Bermejo of Lepe. We meet Juan as a student in Seville, follow him to sea in trading journeys to Africa and Mediterranean ports; meet Columbus and enjoy with him the discovery of the New World. What saves this book from being just another opus about Columbus is the rich ore of fascinating detail about men, women and customs of that era. But, as previously stated, one has no way of telling fact from fiction and even a so-called historical novel cannot be expected to be too full of the one at the expense of the other.

Even if your library is confined to the proverbial five foot book shelf, I would advise you to devote some twenty-two inches thereof to the new 1953 edition of *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia* (F. E. Compton & Co., Chicago). This truly wonderful set of volumes — fifteen to be exact — first saw light some three decades ago. Through frequent re-evaluation by its staff, headed by Dr. Guy Stanton Ford, the encyclopedia has been kept completely up to date. As a writ-

ing man, I speak from experience when I refer to its superior value as a reference work at home, in library, office or school, and say that I have been a user of *Compton's Picture Encyclopedia* since 1934. It is heavily illustrated with photographs, color paintings, drawings, graphs, and maps. I have always been intrigued by the ability of the editors to make its text readable as well as informative. It is a rare approach in the realm of encyclopedias, since it makes the search for knowledge not only precise but pleasant.

Doctor In The House (Harcourt, Brace — \$2.75 — non-fic.) by Richard Gordon, is an amusing but rather disturbing tale about how young medical students live and learn in a London hospital. It is disturbing in that the reader would feel rather reluctant to trust his or her physical welfare to one whose training seems to be so superficial. Forgetting that, *Doctor In The House* is an amusing, interesting book about students cutting surgical capers obviously written by one who went through the mill.

Walter D. Emonds, who has written about life and death among the Indians along the Mohawk as well as the early days of upper New York life in the region of the Erie Canal, is back with another book built around an upstate New York theme and entitled *The Boyds Of Black River* (Dodd, Mead — \$3.00 — fic.). This family chronicle about people and places in the horse and buggy days of rural New York is in the usual delightful Edmonds style.

Praise to Quentin Reynolds for having done a truly masterful job in preparing the life of William Sutton — arch-criminal and jail breaker also known as "Willie the Actor." Throughout this excellent narrative entitled *I, Willie Sutton*

(Farrar, Straus and Young — \$3.50 — non-fic.) Mr. Reynolds has kept excellent perspective with respect to the true character of his protagonist. Sutton never becomes a hero. And it is self-evident that a stickup man who spends endless years in jail, is poor proof that crime pays. Poor as this proof is, the book makes rich reading.

The Square Trap (Little, Brown — \$3.75—fic.) by Irving Shulman is the story of Tomas Cantanios, street urchin in the Los Angeles Mexican quarter. His desire to become a prize fighter leads him into the clutches of an unscrupulous promoter who throws the boy to the wolves after making him a punch-happy wreck through matching him against stronger opponents. A well told tale moving at a fast clip.

An unusual book about the habit patterns of North America animals, from rabbits to bulls, from bats to bears, is *The Sex Life of Wild Animals* (Rinehart — \$3.00 — non-fic.) by Eugene Burns. The author is a West Coast naturalist who has spent many years studying the lives of North American mammals of all sizes. His character studies of these mammals, in and out of love, are constructive and amusing.

A horrible book that should be read is *Monkey On My Back* (Greenberg — \$3.50 — non-fic.) by Wenzell Brown. The title is taken from the phrase used by drug addicts to describe the frightful pains they endure when deprived of narcotics. The book deals completely with the somewhat disguised case histories of teen-agers in the Harlem sector of New York. To those who believe that teen-age addiction is a minor evil, this stark revelation will prove an eye-opener.

Percy Finch, who for many years covered the China news out of Shanghai to the United States and

England, is author of *Shanghai and Beyond* (Scribners — \$4.00 — non-fic.). A journalist of many years standing, he speaks with authority not only about the individuals who made up the population of Shanghai's colorful international settlement back in the "bad old days," but he also comes to realistic grips with the present day rulers of Red China, their ambitions and attainments.

Ever so often we come upon a thoroughly intriguing book about that part of the animal kingdom which is occupied by the strange creatures we know as insects. Such a book is Albro Gaul's *The Wonderful World of Insects* (Rinehart — \$4.00 — non-fic.). This volume is made doubly attractive by many unique action photographs depicting various phases of insect life. Of particular interest are the balances and controls set up by nature in controlling the volume of insect population.

Another excellent history book by that highly productive writer of historical fiction is the *Golden Admiral* (Doubleday — \$3.95 — fic.) by F. Van Wyck Mason. Here we have an exciting, action-filled saga about England during the golden rule of Queen Elizabeth and the no less golden contributions to the Queen by the valiant Captain Drake. As always, Mr. Mason embroiders his story pattern with rich overtones of colorful individuals and interesting side lights on the Elizabethan form of life.

Another contribution toward the heavy flow of man-against-the-sea books in the wake of "Caine Mutiny" is a rather long-drawn but nevertheless attractive novel by Warren Eyster entitled *Far From The Customary Skies* (Random House — \$3.75 — fic.). It deals with the lives of men aboard a

U. S. destroyer during World War II. Candidly, the publishers overreach a little when they call this rather average book "one of the finest novels of men at sea in time of war we have ever read." It is a good enough time killer but cut pretty close to the now standard format of mariners during World War II.

Make a dive for *The Undersea Adventure* (Messner — \$4.50 — non-fic.) by Philippe Diole. Here is a truly wonderful tale about undersea exploration. Far more than an account of the difficulties and dangers of undersea diving, this volume gives vivid descriptions of interesting and important sea bottom explorations into the archaeological past. The accounts of discoveries of ships, wines, and other articles dating back to Roman times., will keep your interest submerged for hours.

Always a dependable workman when it comes to creating biographical data in a well-defined geographical framework, Charles Tenney Jackson writes wonderfully well about his Nebraska prairie boyhood under the title of *The Buffalo Wallow* (Bobbs Merrill — \$3.00 — non-fic.). Those of us who are addicted to this type of Americana, and who isn't, will find this story about the pioneer west awarding reading.

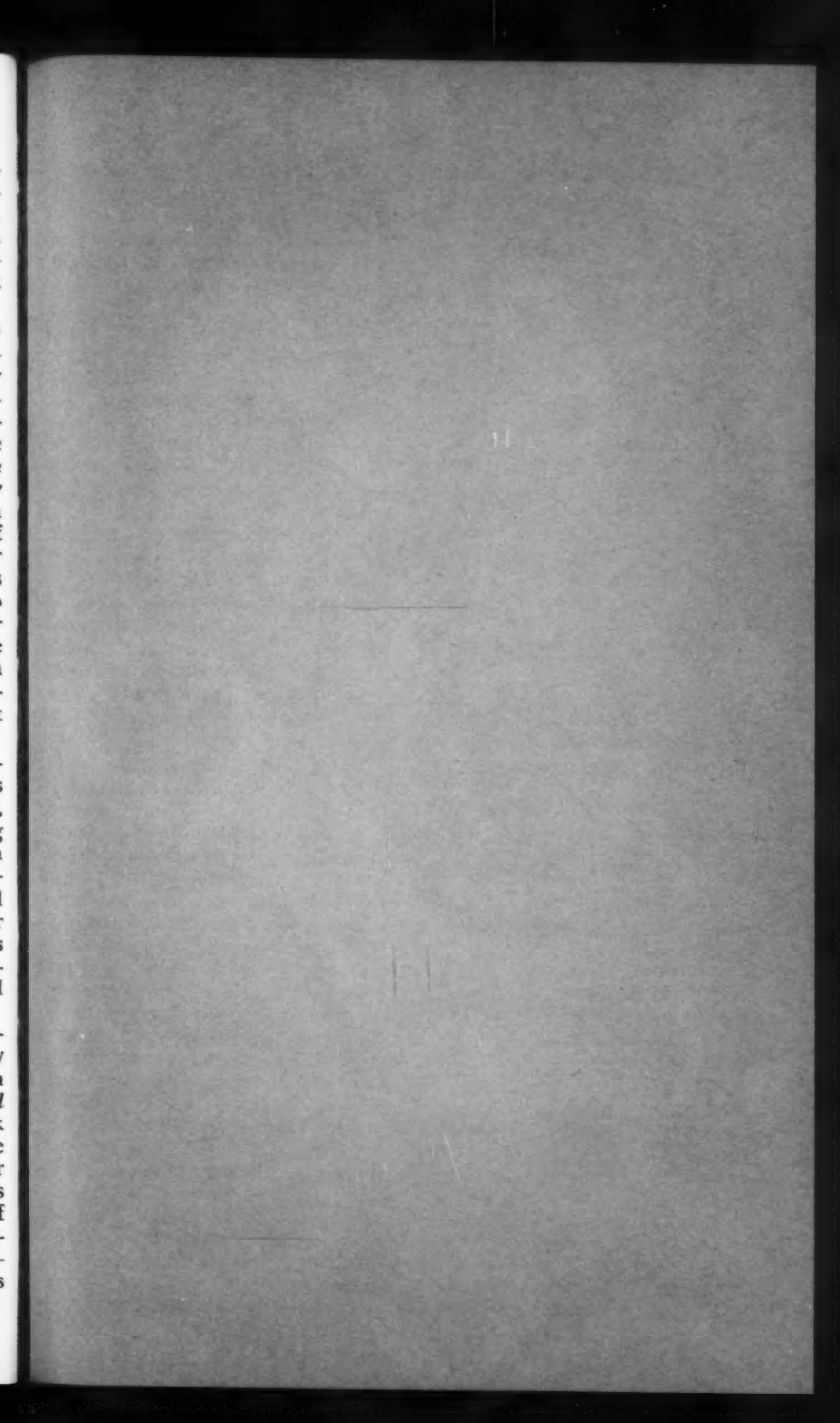
The trouble with most books about Korea, in my eyes at least, is that they carry too high a flavor of news print or else too much of a taste of brand new historical wax works. Therefore, *Back Down the Ridge* (Harcourt, Brace — \$3.00 — nonfic.) by W. L. White is a great and glorious exception. Here the author of "They Were Expendable" and "Journey for Margaret" produces a vivid and exciting story

about the experiences of our fighting men in Korea and their reactions under the stress of battle. Readers who believe that the Korea war is a cold war will learn differently from this account of red hot battle.

Two interesting books on nature are *Bucks and Bows* (Stackpole — \$4.95 — non-fic.) by Walter Perry and *My Health Is Better In November* (Greenberg — \$3.50 — non-fic.) by Havilah Babcock. The former deals with the use of the old time long bow in present day hunting. It gives in addition a very concise and clever picture of the tracks and trails of deer, their feeding and bedding habits, plus the effect of wind. With respect to Mr. Babcock's *My Health Is Better In November*, it contains some three dozen stories dealing with hunting and fishing in South Carolina. Charmingly told by an expert huntsman.

Out of the Midwest (World — \$2.50 — non-fic.) by Frank Siedel is a group of some thirty short stories, each with a profoundly interesting background of a personality which was vital and creative in the building of the Midwest. Mr. Siedel will be remembered pleasantly as author of "The Ohio Story." In this volume the reader meets some interesting people, of the all wool and yard wide American variety.

The average story with newspaper background leaves me fairly cold. However, my enthusiasm ran hot on reading *The Wire God* (Doubleday — \$3.95 — fic.) by Jack Willard. The book follows the rise of a small town Texas reporter as he uses friends and colleagues as stepping stones to reach the top of an important newspaper wire service. Full of fascinating details regarding the running of news bureaus and newspapers.



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